



Department
for Education

Religious studies

GCSE subject content

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The content for religious studies GCSE

Introduction

1. GCSE subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills common to all GCSE specifications in a given subject. It provides the framework within which awarding organisations create the detail of their specifications, so ensuring progression from Key Stage 3 and the possibilities for progression to GCE A level.
2. By setting out the range of subject content and areas of study for GCSE specifications in religious studies, the subject content is consistent with the requirements for the statutory provision for religious education in current legislation as it applies to different types of school.

Subject aims and learning outcomes

3. GCSE specifications in religious studies should:
 - develop students' knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs, such as atheism and humanism
 - develop students' knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, and sources of wisdom and authority, including through their reading of key religious texts, other texts, and scriptures of the religions they are studying
 - develop students' ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments, demonstrating their depth and breadth of understanding of the subject
 - provide opportunities for students to engage with questions of belief, value, meaning, purpose, truth, and their influence on human life
 - challenge students to reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes in the light of what they have learnt and contribute to their preparation for adult life in a pluralistic society and global community
4. GCSE specifications in religious studies must require students to:
 - demonstrate knowledge and understanding of **two religions**
 - demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key sources of wisdom and authority including scripture and/or sacred texts, where appropriate, which support contemporary religious faith
 - understand the influence of religion on individuals, communities and societies

- understand significant common and divergent views between and/or within religions and beliefs
- apply knowledge and understanding in order to analyse questions related to religious beliefs and values
- construct well-informed and balanced arguments on matters concerned with religious beliefs and values set out in the subject content below

Programme of Study

5. Specifications may offer alternative routes through the qualification, drawing from the content set out below in order to provide students with one or more of the following programmes of study:

- Study of religion: the beliefs and teachings and practices (topics a and b from Part One) in relation to two religions (making up 50% of the overall qualification weighting, shared equally between the two religions); AND either:
 - a study of four themes from Part Two adopting a textual approach (50% of the qualification), OR
 - a study of four themes from Part Two adopting the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world (50% of the qualification), OR
 - a study of four themes from Part Two adopting a textual approach for two of those themes and the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world for two themes (50% of the qualification)

OR

- study all four topics from Part One in relation to a primary religion (50% of the overall qualification weighting); AND beliefs and teachings and practices (topics a and b from Part One) in relation to a second religion (25% of the qualification); AND either:
 - two themes from Part Two, adopting a textual approach (25% of the qualification), OR
 - two themes from Part Two, adopting the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world (25% of the qualification)

6. Throughout all of the programmes of study, specifications should include the study of common and divergent views within traditions in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed.

7. Specifications may offer students the ability to study the themes within Part 2 in relation to differing perspectives. The differing perspectives may be provided in the following ways:

- Different perspectives from within one particular religion studied in part 1 e.g. a Baptist perspective and an Anglican perspective on a theme
- Different perspectives between different religions e.g. a Buddhist perspective and a Hindu perspective on a theme

8. In addition, all specifications must require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the fact that:

- the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian
- religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse and include the following religions: Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as other religions and non-religious beliefs, such as atheism and humanism

9. Awarding organisations can develop, combine or cross reference the required content in any way appropriate to the specification, as long as the overall criteria are met.

Subject content

Part One: Study of religions

10. The content outlined below sets out the requirements for the study of religions, which is described for specific religions in annex A.

11. Where a religion is studied from the perspective of one group or denomination the second option chosen must be from another principal religion (i.e. Christianity and Catholic Christianity could not be combined). Where a group or denomination is studied it must be studied in the context of the wider religion to which it belongs.

12. The four (study of religion) topics from which specifications may draw, in line with the programme of study set out above, are:

- a. beliefs and teachings of religion: beliefs about God, gods or ultimate reality; the role of communities of faith, key moral principles and the meanings and purposes of human life
- b. practices: the application of beliefs and teachings to the lives of modern believers including the study of places and forms of worship (as appropriate to each religion) rituals, prayer, meditation, festivals and celebrations, fasting, rites of passage, religious journeys and pilgrimage

- c. sources of wisdom and authority: the nature, history and treatment of key religious texts or scriptures; and where appropriate, of key religious figures and/or teachers from the early history of the tradition and/or the modern age
- d. forms of expression and ways of life: the influence of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies through ways of life and moral codes, through art forms such as drama, dance, literature, architecture and music inspired by religions and belief, and the role of these art forms in worship or ritual

Part Two: Textual studies and religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world

13. Students should engage with the subject content set out below for thematic studies through either a 'textual studies' or a 'religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world' approach.

Textual studies

14. If following a textual studies approach, all students must investigate primary religious texts from one or both of the religions they have studied for Part One: Study of Religions relating to:

- the significance, importance and influence of the texts for individuals, communities and societies
- how varied interpretations of the meaning of such texts may give rise to diversity within traditions
- how far communities give authority to such texts especially in relation to other sources of contemporary authority

15. Specifications must require students to demonstrate an understanding of these three issues in relation to the text as whole, while also studying themes of central concern to the religious text they are exploring.

16. Specifications should prescribe the study of clearly referenced material from the particular religion or religions selected. A single extended extract or multiple shorter ones from one or several texts may be specified, but taken as a whole the material must be sufficient to enable the themes to be explored thoroughly, for different perspectives to be explored and for the assessment objectives to be met.

17. Decisions about the number and length of the extracts must take account of the level of challenge posed by the comprehension of the material and whether the selection is taken from one religious tradition or two.

Religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world

18. If the approach to thematic studies is through a religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world approach, students must be required to include a study of different philosophical and ethical arguments and their impact and influence in the modern world. They should demonstrate the depth of their understanding of religion through the application of teachings from religions, beliefs and through specific references to sources of wisdom and authority including scripture and/or sacred texts as appropriate. These texts might include, for example: the Bible; Qur'an; Torah; The Pali Canon; Vedas; or Guru Granth Sahib. Other sources of wisdom and authority might include, for example: St Augustine of Hippo; Maimonides; Archbishop Thomas Cranmer; The historical Buddha; Gautama/Shakyamuni; Shankara; or Guru Nanak). Further examples of sources of wisdom and authority can be found in the annexes to this document.

Themes

- a. accounts in texts of key events in the lives of founders or important religious figures, their significance and influence, including on life in the 21st century. How varied interpretations of the meaning of such texts may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study only)
- b. the significance, importance and influence of religious texts as a source for religious law making and codes for living in the 21st century. How varied interpretations of the meaning of these sources may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study only)
- c. the significance, importance and influence of stories and/or parables that communicate religious, moral and spiritual truths. How varied interpretations of the meaning of such texts may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study only)
- d. relationships and families, religious teachings about the nature and purpose of families in the 21st century, sex, marriage, cohabitation and divorce. Issues related to the nature and purpose of families; roles of men and women; equality; gender prejudice and discrimination. How varied interpretations of sources and/or of teachings may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study or religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world)
- e. religious views of the world, including their relationship to scientific views; beliefs about death and an afterlife; explanations of the origins and value of the universe and of human life. How varied interpretations of sources and/or of teachings may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study or religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world)
- f. the existence of God, gods and ultimate reality, and ways in which God, gods or ultimate reality might be understood; through revelation, visions, miracles or enlightenment. How varied interpretations of sources or of teachings may give rise to

diversity within traditions (textual study or religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world)

- g. religion, peace and conflict; violence, war, pacifism, terrorism, just war theory, holy war; the role of religion and belief in 21st century conflict and peace making; the concepts of justice, forgiveness and reconciliation (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)
- h. crime and punishment; causes of crime, aims of punishment, the concepts of forgiveness, retribution, deterrence, reformation; the death penalty, treatment of criminals; good, evil and suffering (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)
- i. dialogue within and between religions and non-religious beliefs; how those with religious and non-religious beliefs respond to critiques of their beliefs including the study of a range of attitudes towards those with different religious views – inclusivist, exclusivist and pluralist approaches (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)
- j. religion, human rights and social justice; issues of equality and freedom of religion or belief; prejudice and discrimination in religion and belief; human rights; wealth and poverty; racial prejudice and discrimination (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)

Religious studies short course

19. The content for GCSE religious studies short courses will be half the content of the GCSE full course. Specifications must offer the opportunity to either:

- study beliefs and teachings and practices (topics a and b from Part One) in relation to two religions

OR

- study beliefs and teachings (topic a from Part One) only in relation to two religions, AND two different themes from Part Two adopting the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world

Annex A: Part One: Study of religions

Awarding organisations must decide which and how many terms in languages other than English should form part of the assessed material in order to demonstrate comparability between routes of study.

Buddhism

Common and divergent views within Buddhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Students should know and understand the basis for beliefs and teachings (1) and practices (2) and be able to reference relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts. Specifications that include topic (3) 'sources of wisdom and authority' must require students to study in detail the content requirements listed under that heading.

1. Beliefs and teachings

- the Buddha: including narratives regarding his early life; the Four Sights, Enlightenment
- the Dhamma/Dharma: Dependent origination/conditionality (paticcasamupada/pratityasamutpada); Three Marks of Existence (lakkhanas/lakshanas): suffering-unsatisfactoriness (dukkha), impermanence (anicca/anitya); no fixed self, essence or soul (anatta/anatman), Four Noble Truths
- the First Noble Truth: suffering (dukkha), different types of suffering
- the Second Noble Truth: the causes of suffering/unsatisfactoriness (samudaya), Three Poisons
- the Third Noble Truth: cessation of craving/desire(tanha/trsna), interpretations of nibbana/nirvana and Enlightenment
- the Fourth Noble Truth: the Eightfold Path (magga/marga) to nibbana/nirvana, The Three-fold Way: ethics (sila), meditation (Samadhi) and wisdom (panna/prajna)
- the human personality: in Theravada - Five Aggregates (khandas/skandhas), in Mahayana - sunyata; tathagatagarbha; Buddha-nature
- Human destiny: Arhat (Arahant) and Bodhisattva Ideals, Buddhahood and the Pure Land
- Ethical teachings: kamma/karma and rebirth/rebecoming (punabbhava); compassion (karuna); loving kindness (metta/maitri); five precepts (pancha sila); in the Mahayana: the development of the Six Perfections (paramitas) or virtues

2. Practices

- the significance of meditation; samatha (concentration and tranquillity) practices such as mindfulness of breathing and maitri/metta bhavana (loving kindness), vipassana (insight) practices such as zazen; and the visualisation of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
- the role of chanting: as a devotional practice and aiding mental concentration
- the role of mantra recitation: chanting sacred syllables, use of malas
- the importance of features and functions of Buddhist places of worship such as temples, gompas, and viharas, shrines, artefacts and offerings
- the significance of puja/devotional ritual in different Buddhist contexts
- the significance of ceremonies and rituals associated with death and mourning in Theravada communities and in Japan and Tibet
- the origins and meaning of festivals and retreats such as Theravada Wesak; Vassa/Rain Retreat and Kathina; Uposatha days; Mahayana: Hanamatsuri and Obon (Japanese), Parinirvana Day; Tibetan: Lama Tsong Khapa Day;

3. Sources of wisdom and authority

- The historical Buddha Gautama/Shakyamuni
- Archetypal Buddhas and Bodhisattvas such as Amitabha/Amida
- Dharma as description of Truth/Reality and as the path of practice leading to realisation of that Truth;
- Sangha: varying interpretations of the term in different traditions
- roles in the monastic and lay sangha; varying forms of ordination such as married priests in Japanese traditions; ordination in the Triratna Buddhist Order; additional precepts for ordained
- preceptors and elders in the Theravada, gurus/lamas in Tibetan Buddhism, the teacher-pupil relationship in Zen/Ch'an
- scriptures: The Pali Canon (the Tripitaka); Mahayana scriptures such as the Prajnaparamita Sutras and Lotus Sutra; the Gohonzon in Nichiren traditions
- personal experience as authoritative: (see the Kalama Sutta)

- historical and contemporary figures such as Emperor Ashoka; His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (Tibetan); Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett (Order of Buddhist Contemplatives); Sangharakshita (Triratna Buddhist Order), Ajahn Sumedho (Thai Forest Tradition); Thich Nhat Hanh, (Order of Interbeing); Dr Ambedkar (India)

4. Forms of expression and ways of life

- statues of the Buddha (Rupas) and Bodhisattvas within different traditions
- the use of thangkas (In Tibetan Buddhism) including their use in worship
- the use of symbols: e.g. the lotus flower, the wheel of the Dharma/Dhamma, stupa
- the use of mudras (hand and body gestures) in iconography and their use in worship
- the use of the Tibetan Wheel of Life: relationship to key teaching on karma and dependent origination/conditionality (pratityasamutpada/ paticcasamuppada)
- one example of Buddhist charitable work in the UK (e.g. UK Buddhist development charity, the Karuna Trust), Buddhist chaplaincy work such as Angulimala, the Prison Chaplaincy, or Buddhist Healthcare Chaplaincy Group
- the role and importance of pilgrimage such as: Bodh Gaya (site of the Buddha's Enlightenment); Deer Park at Sarnath (site of the Buddha's first teaching of the Dhamma/ Dharma)
- the place of Buddhism in the UK: study of one or more of the UK's wide variety of Buddhist communities, chosen from the Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana, as well as modern Buddhist movements, "humanistic" and "secular" Buddhist traditions and mindfulness movements.

Christianity

Common and divergent views within Christianity in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Students should know and understand the basis for beliefs and teachings (1) and practices (2) and be able to reference relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts. Specifications that include topic (3) 'sources of wisdom and authority' must require students to study in detail the content requirements listed under that heading.

1. Beliefs and teachings

- the nature of God, such as omnipotence, the problem of evil/suffering and a loving and righteous God

- creation, including the role of Word and Spirit, with textual references to John 1 and Genesis 1-3
- the Trinity, including the oneness of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- the person of Jesus Christ, including beliefs and teachings relating to his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension
- salvation, including law, sin, grace and Spirit, the role of Christ in salvation, and the nature of atonement
- eschatological beliefs and teachings, including the importance of resurrection and life after death, judgement, heaven and hell

2. Practices

- the significance of different forms of worship including liturgical, informal and individual
- the role and meaning of the sacraments in Christian life, including baptism and eucharist
- the place of prayer, including the Lord's Prayer, set prayers and informal prayer
- the role and importance of pilgrimage and celebrations, including at least two contrasting examples of Christian pilgrimage (such as Walsingham, Taizé, Iona) and celebrations
- the place of mission, evangelism and church growth
- the role of the church in the local community and living practices
- the importance of the worldwide church including working for reconciliation, the persecuted church and the work of one of Christian Aid/Tearfund/Cafod

3. Sources of wisdom and authority

- the Bible, including its development, structure and purpose (Old Testament: law, history, prophets, writings; and New Testament: gospels, letters), its unity as the Word of God, and two contrasting interpretations of its authority
- Jesus as the Word of God and the role of Jesus in modelling practices such as love for others, forgiveness, servanthood, reconciliation and social justice, and in establishing the Kingdom of God
- the growth of the Church, including belief in the Church as the body of Christ; the development of different churches: Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Pentecostal/Charismatic

- leadership in the Church, including the Pope, bishops, priests/ministers/pastors; the role of women in leadership
- the role of the individual, including religious experience, reason and personal conscience
- the use of the Bible in worship and in personal and ethical decision making by Christians

4. Forms of expression and ways of life

- the significance and meaning of at least three forms of art, drawn from:
 - icons
 - drawing/painting
 - sculpture
 - music
 - drama e.g. the mystery plays
 - literature
- the use of symbolism and imagery in religious art including Christian symbols such as ChiRho, Cross, fish, Alpha and Omega, symbols of the four evangelists
- the use of different styles of music in worship, including: psalms, hymns and worship songs

Christianity (Catholic Christianity)

Common and divergent views within Catholic Christianity in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Students should know and understand the basis for beliefs and teachings (1) and practices (2) and be able to reference relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts. Specifications that include topic (3) 'sources of wisdom and authority' must require students to study in detail the content requirements listed under that heading.

1. Beliefs and teachings

- one God as a Trinity of persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit as expressed in the Nicene creed. The scriptural origins of this belief and its historical development.
- Biblical accounts of Creation (Genesis 1 and 2) and their significance for Catholic understanding of the nature of God, the dignity of human beings and of humanity's relationship with creation.

- Jesus as incarnate Son, divine Word, both fully God and fully human. The scriptural origins of this belief.
- the redemptive efficacy of the life, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus and their significance for Catholic beliefs about salvation and grace
- Catholic beliefs about eschatology: life after death: resurrection, judgement, heaven, hell and purgatory

2. Practices

- the significance of prayer as “the raising of the mind and heart to God” both in formulaic prayers and extempore prayer, including the Lord’s Prayer
- the importance of the sacramental nature of reality. The names, meanings and effects of the seven sacraments, with a particular emphasis on the Eucharist as the “source and summit of Christian life”
- the role and importance of forms of popular piety, such as the Rosary, Eucharistic adoration, Stations of the Cross and pilgrimage to, such as, Walsingham, Taize, Lourdes, Assisi, Rome. The funeral rite.
- Catholic beliefs about the essential requirement to love our neighbour in concrete ways locally, nationally and globally. How these beliefs are reflected in Catholic Social Teaching; in Catholic teaching on justice, peace and reconciliation; in the work of Catholic agencies, such as Cafod, Caritas and Missio.
- the meaning and significance of mission and evangelism for Catholics locally, nationally and globally.

3. Sources of wisdom and authority

- the Bible as the revealed word of God, its origins, structure and literary forms. Catholic biblical interpretation and understanding of the meaning of inspiration.
- the magisterium of the Church today: both conciliar and pontifical. The nature and importance of the Second Vatican Council, its history and four key documents.
- the Church as “the Body of Christ” and “people of God”. The meaning of the four marks of the Church - one, holy, catholic and apostolic. An understanding of Mary as a model of the Church
- the example and teaching of Jesus as the authoritative source for moral teaching. Jesus as fulfilment of the Law. Natural law, virtue and the primacy of conscience

4. Forms of expression and ways of life

- an understanding of how the architecture, design and decoration of Catholic churches reflects Catholic belief and facilitates worship
- the significance and meaning of at least three different forms of art expressive of Catholic beliefs drawn from:
 - paintings, frescos and drawings, such as the works of Michelangelo or Raphael
 - sculpture and statuary
 - artefacts, such as sacred vessels, sarcophagi, hunger cloths, illustrated manuscripts etc.
 - drama e.g. the mystery plays
- the use of different styles of music in worship including Mass settings used in liturgy, psalms, plainchant, traditional hymns and contemporary worship songs.
- the use of symbolism and imagery in religious art including Christian symbols such as ChiRho, crosses and crucifixes, fish, dove, eagle, Alpha and Omega, symbols of the four evangelists.

Hinduism

Common and divergent views within Hinduism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Students should know and understand the basis for beliefs and teachings (1) and practices (2) and be able to reference relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts. Specifications that include topic (3) 'sources of wisdom and authority' must require students to study in detail the content requirements listed under that heading.

1. Beliefs and teachings

- the individual, eternal self (atman), distinct from material mind and body; samsara (cycle of birth and death), the law of karma (moral action and reaction); types of moksha (liberation)
- prakriti (matter); the tri-guna (three qualities); maya (illusion); cosmology; the cycle of four ages; many worlds and their diverse inhabitants
- brahman (spirit; the ultimate reality or absolute truth); nirguna and saguna brahman; vaikuntha (spiritual worlds)

- three features of the divine: 1. brahman (everywhere, as non-personal); 2. antaryami (within the heart); 3. bhagavan (beyond, as a personal loving God)
- manifestations of the divine: the tri-murti; male and female deities; avatara; the murti
- the four aims of human life; the meaning of dharma; sanatana dharma; varnashrama dharma
- individual free will, and responses to suffering; knowledge and ignorance; personal virtues e.g. ahimsa, respect, empathy, mind/sense control, humility, love

2. Practices

- the importance of four paths towards yoga (union with the divine): karma (action), jnana (knowledge), astanga (meditation) and bhakti (devotion)
- the significance of forms of worship/meditation: havan, puja, arati, darshan, bhajan/kirtan, japa
- the importance of places of worship: the home; temple; outdoors (e.g. shrine); the space of the heart
- the importance of focusses of worship and representations of the divine: one god (personal or non-personal); the many deities, guru and other elders; holy land, hills and rivers; sacred plants and animals
- the origins and meaning of sacred festivals, such as Diwali, Holi, Navaratri, Dussehra, Ram Navami, Ratha-yatra, Janmashtami, Raksha Bandhan
- the role of pilgrimage; associated purposes, practices and sacred sites
- the importance of Hindu environmental projects e.g. “cow protection”; charities that promote well-being, social inclusion and women’s rights

3. Sources of wisdom and authority

- three main sources of authority: 1. texts (oral and written) 2. holy people 3. personal insight
- main divisions of text: 1. Shruti (revealed) and 2. Smriti (remembered); key texts: Vedas; Upanishads; Vedanta-sutra; Ramayana; Mahabharata; Bhagavad-gita; Puranas
- the names of the six schools of Hindu philosophy (sad-darshana); Vedanta theology, especially dvaita and advaita; debates about the existence, nature and identity of God

- the role of the four primary religious traditions/denominations
- the roles of guru and sacred lineages; the guru-disciple relationship
- the importance of other leaders, such as rishis, saints, brahmanas, temple priests, sannyasins/swamis, famous women, theologians (e.g. Shankara and Ramanuja)
- the tradition's own views on its origins, history and founding figures; Hindu reformers
- the Sanskrit language; its role and meaning within liturgy and scholarship

4. Forms of expression and ways of life

- the role of world renouncing ascetic and tantric traditions; world-affirming traditions – brahminical culture, social systems and family life; popular Hinduism
- the importance of modern leaders and movements in the UK: VHP, ISKCON and Swaminarayan
- the work of Hindu environmental projects; charities that promote well-being, social inclusion and women's rights
- the significance and meaning of three visual art forms in Hinduism, drawn from symbols, rangoli, painting, temple architecture, sculpture, decoration of shrine and sacred image
- the significance and meaning of the performing arts in Hinduism: such as song, dance, music, drama, poetics; aesthetics and rasa theology
- the significance of Hindu etiquette: in relation to food, diet and hospitality; dress and ornamentation; respect for elders; modern expressions of culture

Islam

Common and divergent views within Islam in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Students should know and understand the basis for beliefs and teachings (1) and practices (2) and be able to reference relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts. Specifications that include topic (3) 'sources of wisdom and authority' must require students to study in detail the content requirements listed under that heading.

1. Beliefs and teachings

- the six articles of faith in Sunni Islam and five roots of 'Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam

- the nature of Allah: oneness (Tawhid), immanence, transcendence, omnipotence, beneficence, mercy, fairness and justice (Adalat in Shi'a Islam)
- prophethood (Risalah), including at least three examples chosen from Adam, Ibrahim, Isma'il, Musa, Dawud, Isa, Muhammad
- books (Kutub); Scrolls (Sahifah), Gospel (Injil), Torah (Tawrat), Psalms (Zabur)
- angels (Malaikah) such as Jibril, Izra'il, Mika'il, Israfil, Munkar/Nakir and Kiraman/Katibin
- predestination (al-Qadr) and human freedom and its relationship to the Day of Judgement;
- Akhirah: life after death, human responsibility and accountability, heaven and hell

2. Practices

- the Five Pillars of Sunni Islam and Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam
- Shahadah: declaration of faith, the place of the Shahadah in Muslim practice
- Salah: including its significance; how and why Muslims pray, ablution, times, directions, movements and recitations, in the home and mosque and elsewhere. Jummah prayer
- Sawm: the role and significance of fasting during the month of Ramadan. Origins, duties, benefits, those who are excused and why, the Night of Power
- Zakah: the role and significance of giving alms: its origins, how and why it is given, benefits of receipt. Khums (Shi'a)
- Hajj: Pilgrimage to Makkah: its role, origins, how and why it is performed
- Jihad: the meaning and significance of greater and lesser; origins, influence and conditions for declaration of lesser jihad.
- the origins and meaning of festivals and commemorations: such as Id-ul-Adha, Id-ul-Fitr, Id-ul-Ghadeer and Ashura

3. Sources of wisdom and authority

- the Qur'an including its revelation, compilation and its use by Muslims
- the Prophet Muhammad: life, teaching and authority including his call; work in Makkah and Madinah, the hijrah, role as 'seal of the Prophets' and as a role model

- the family of the Prophet Muhammad including Caliph/Imam Ali (Ahl-ul-Bayt) in Sunni and Shi'a Islam; the origins of differences and implications for questions of authority
- the Hadith as a record of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, compilation, main collections (Sunni and Shi'a), elements of Hadith - isnad and matn
- Shari'ah: how it is agreed including sources used by the main schools of Sunni and Shi'a Law; Qur'an; Hadith, analogy (Qiyas) and consensus (Ijma'); the role of judges (qadis) and scholars (the 'ulama)
- the Imam in Sunni and Shi'a Islam: origins, nature, role in individual and community life. The doctrine of Nass, the inerrancy and intercession of Imams in Shi'a Islam.

4. Forms of expression and ways of life

- Muslim identity expressed through the ummah including the ceremonies for welcoming a child into the ummah; expectations about modesty including dress codes
- the work of one national Muslim organisation in relieving poverty and suffering in the UK
- the concepts of halal and haram; categories, how they are applied to laws of food and drink, riba - prohibition of interest
- the significance and meaning of at least three forms of art as an expression of Muslim belief chosen from calligraphy, music, poetry and architecture
- the importance of the mosque: religious features of mosques including design, furniture, artefacts and associated practices
- Shi'a obligatory actions: encouraging others to do good (Amr bil Maruf) and discouraging them from doing bad (Nahy Anil Munkar), Tawallah and tabarra; Love for the Prophet Muhammad and his family and disdain for their enemies
- The significance of Sufi ways of life including the origins, Sufi orders, the Sheikh, saints, teachers such as al-Ghazālī, ibn al-'Arabi and Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya, key practices such as music, dance, poetry, fasting, dhikr

Judaism

Common and divergent views within Judaism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Students should know and understand the basis for beliefs and teachings (1) and practices (2) and be able to reference relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts. Specifications that include topic (3) 'sources of wisdom and authority' must require students to study in detail the content requirements listed under that heading.

1. Beliefs and teachings

- the nature of God including God as One, Creator, Law-Giver and Judge
- the divine presence (Shekhinah)
- the importance of the Covenant at Sinai (the Ten Commandments) including the role of Moses
- the importance that Judaism places on the sanctity of human life, including the concept of Pikuach Nefesh
- the nature and role of the Messiah
- the Promised Land promised to Abraham and his descendants
- key moral principles including the relationship between free will and the 613 Mitzvot
- Mitzvot between man and God and Mitzvot between man and man
- life after death including judgement and resurrection

2. Practices

- the place of public acts of worship: synagogue services
- the significance of the use of Tenakh (the Written Law) and Talmud (the Oral Law) in daily life
- the place of worship in the home and of private prayer
- the significance of prayer in Jewish worship including Amidah – the standing prayer
- the role of rituals: birth ceremonies; Bar and Bat Mitzvah; marriage; mourning rituals
- the importance of Shabbat in the home and synagogue
- the origins and meaning of festivals such as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot

- the importance of the synagogue; religious features of synagogues including design, artefacts and associated practices
- the role of dietary laws: kosher and trefah, separation of milk and meat

3. Sources of wisdom and authority

- diversity of beliefs regarding the interpretation of sources of wisdom and authority amongst the Jewish community
- the Tenakh (the Written Law): Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim
- the Talmud (the Oral Law): collection of the Mishnah and Gemara (use in daily life)
- the significance of different denominations of Judaism including Orthodox (to include Chasidic and Modern Orthodox), and Liberal and Reform (the Pluralistic movement)
- practices associated with sources of authority in daily life including the use of tefillin, mezuzah and tzitzit
- interpretation and application of sources of authority through study in yeshivot and midrashot and the authority and role of the Beth Din
- the role of the rabbi in the synagogue and the community

4. Forms of expression and ways of life

- symbolism: how symbols and artefacts are used in worship including, Chanukiah and Megillah
- expressing beliefs through Tzedekah, Gemilut Chassidim, Bikur Cholim, and Tikkun Ha Olam – 'Repairing/healing the world' and Chessed – kindness to others
- different attitudes to Zionism and the State of Israel among Jewish people
- the importance of nurture of the young in the Jewish family
- the work of one national Jewish organisation providing care for those in need such as in the relief of poverty and suffering, the support of families or in the promotion of Jewish learning and education in the UK
- the significance and meaning of at least three forms of art, drawn from:
 - drawing/painting
 - sculpture
 - music
 - drama

Sikhism

Common and divergent views within Sikhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Students should know and understand the basis for beliefs and teachings (1) and practices (2) and be able to reference relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts. Specifications that include topic (3) 'sources of wisdom and authority' must require students to study in detail the content requirements listed under that heading.

1. Beliefs and teachings

- the nature of God as expressed in the Mool Mantra
- God as Creator
- the nature of human life as an opportunity to unite with God
- karma and rebirth, and the aim of mukti (liberation)
- the importance of being God-centred (gurmukh) and the elimination of pride/ego (haumai)
- the oneness of humanity: equality of all human beings; complete equality of men and women as expressed in the Guru Granth Sahib and in examples of stories from the lives of the Gurus and in Sikhism today
- equality as expressed in examples of stories from the lives of the Gurus and in Sikhism today
- the priority of service to others
- the role of the sangat (community)

2. Practices

- the importance of the gurdwara: religious features of the gurdwara including design, furniture, artefacts and associated practices
- the role of the gurdwara within the Sikh community
- the meaning and significance of langar as an expression of sewa (selfless service to others)
- the significance of the practice of meditating on the name of God (nam japna) in daily life and in the gurdwara
- the role of prayer in the home

- the origins and meaning of festivals (gurpurbs) such as Guru Nanak's birthday, Vaisakhi, Diwali, commemorations of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan and Guru Tagh Bahadur Ji
- the role and importance of the akand path (continuous 48 hour reading of the Guru Granth Sahib)
- the meaning and significance of birth and naming ceremonies; the significance and use of the names Singh and Kaur, Amrit sanskar (the initiation ceremony)
- the importance of visiting Sikh historical gurdwaras including the Harmander Sahib in Amritsar (the Golden Temple)

3. Sources of wisdom and authority

- the concept of 'Guru' and the place of the Ten Gurus in Sikhism
- the significance of the life and work of Guru Nanak including his three days in the river, his teachings about God and about equality, and his establishment of Kartarpur
- the life and work of Guru Gobind Singh including Vaisakhi and the formation of the Khalsa
- the authority and status of the Guru Granth Sahib, its origins, compilation, authority and status as the living Guru shown in practices including reading in worship and study
- the role of the Rahit Maryada (Sikh Code of Conduct) as a guide to life and practice
- the role of the granthi (custodian/reader of the Guru Granth Sahib) and other gurdwara functionaries such as the ragi (a person who sings and/or plays a musical instrument during worship)

4. Forms of expression and ways of life

- the importance of sewa in its various forms - tan (physical service), man (mental service) and dhan (material service)
- the use of symbols, such as the Ik Onkar and khanda as expressions of belief
- the 'Five ks' (Panj Kakke) and their significance
- the importance of respect for all religions as written in the Guru Granth Sahib and practiced through langar and within the Sikh community
- the role and importance of kirtan (singing) in diwan

- Nam japna and the avoidance of the five evils of lust, anger, pride, greed and undue attachment, honest work (kirat karni), and service of those in need (vand chhakna) as key values in life
- the work of one Sikh organisation in the relief of poverty and suffering
- the work of one Sikh organisation promoting community cohesion and interfaith understanding
- the significance of the prohibition of the use of pictures or statues as aids for worship, the availability of artists' expression of Gurus' pictures for decoration



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for Education

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